

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7497

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: FOMER PM KANELLOPOULOS ANNOUNCES ABSTENTION FROM
NOVEMBER 17 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY. FORMER PM KANELLOPOULOS (ERE) ISSUED
STATEMENT OCTOBER 14 ANNOUNCING HIS DECISION TO ABSTAIN
FROM PARTICIPATION IN NOVEMBER 17 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
WITHOUT HOWEVER WITHDRAWING FROM PUBLIC LIFE. TWO
FACTORS CITED AS BASIS FOR DECISION ARE DESIRE TO MAINTAIN
A POSITION WIDER IN SCOPE THAN THAT POSSIBLE WITHIN AN
INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL PARTY AND EXPECTATION THAT AS NON-
CONTESTANT HE MIGHT HAVE CAPABILITY TO TAMP DOWN EXTREMES
AND FANATICISM WHICH COULD EMERGE DURING UPCOMING ELECTORAL
CAMPAIGN ESPECIALLY AGAINST BACKGROUND OF CYPRUS TRAGEDY.
BOTH PM CARAMANLIS AND CENTER UNION LEADER MAVROS EXPRESSED
GRATIFICATION THAT KANNELLOPOULOS NOT WITHDRAWING FROM
PUBLIC LIFE COMPLETELY. END SUMMARY.

2. FORMER PM KANELLOPOULOS (ERE) ANNOUNCED DECISION
OCTOBER 14 TO ABSTAIN FROM PARTICIPATION IN UPCOMING
NOVEMBER 17 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, HE
STATED THIS DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN HE WOULD WITHDRAW
FROM PUBLIC LIFE. TEXT OF STATEMENT FOLLOWS.

QTE I HAVE DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORTHCOMING
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ELECTIONS. I KNOW THAT THIS DECISION WILL SADDEN MY FEW

OR NUMEROUS FRIENDS. I MUST ADMIT THAT I AM THE FIRST TO FEEL SORROW OVER THIS DECISION, BECAUSE, AFTER A POLITICAL LIFE OF 40 YEARS, CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE FORCED ME TO TAKE A DECISION WHICH IS CONTRARY TO MY CHARACTER. I AM USED TO FIGHTING. MY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT I WITHDRAW FROM PUBLIC LIFE.

FOR THE DECISION I HAVE TAKEN, I FEEL I OWE TO BOTH MY FRIENDS AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF GREECE CERTAIN EXPLANATIONS.

A) MY MISSION DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF TYRANNY EXPANDED VERY GREATLY. I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO NARROW IT NOW. AND THAT IS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, SHOULD I JOIN ONE OF THE POLITICAL FORMATIONS THAT WILL EVENTUALLY CLAIM THE VOTE OF THE PEOPLE. I WAS NOT GIVEN THE HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY, AND DID NOT HAVE THE GOOD FORTUNE, TO CONTRIBUTE DECISIVELY TO THE FORMATION OF ONE OF THE EXISTING PARTIES. IF CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER JULY 23 HAD ALLOWED ME TO DO SO, THEN, OF COURSE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO JOIN THE PARTY I WOULD HAVE HELPED TO PUT TOGETHER. SINCE, HOWEVER, THIS DID NOT HAPPEN, I CONSIDER IT IMPERATIVE TO RETAIN MY POSITION, WHICH DURING THE YEARS OF TYRANNY WAS RECOGNIZED BY CIRCLES WIDER THAN ONE OR TWO POLITICAL PARTIES.

B) THE TIMES CONTINUE TO BE VERY CRITICAL. THE TRAGEDY OF CYPRUS MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO DEGENERATE INTO A DISASTER SUCH AS THAT OF 1922. AN INDISPENSABLE PREREQUISITE, HOWEVER, FOR AVERTING SUCH A DISASTER, IS TO AVOID EXTREMES AND FANATICISM IN OUR POLITICAL LIFE. THERE IS NOTHING LESS COMPATIBLE WITH DEMOCRACY THAN FANATICISM AND INTOLERANCE. THESE DEFECTS ARE PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS AT A TIME OF NATIONAL TRAGEDY, SUCH AS THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS.

C) I FEEL I MUST EXPRESS MY THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE PROPOSED TO ME TO INCLUDE ME IN THE LIST OF THEIR CANDIDATES. UNQTE.

3. REACTION OF PM CARAMANLIS TO KANELLOPOULOS
STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

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QTE I MUCH REGRET THE DECISION TAKEN BY MR. KANELLOPOULOS TO ABSTAIN FROM THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, I AM GREATLY SATISFIED THAT HE IS NOT DEFINITELY WITHDRAWING FROM THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. I WAS BOTH EXPECTING AND HOPING FOR THIS LATTER DECISION. UNQTE

4. IN A SEPARATE LETTER, KANELLOPOULOS BOTH INFORMED CENTER UNION LEADER MAVROS OF HIS DECISION TO ABSTAIN

FROM ELECTIONS AND ALSO THANKED MAVROS FOR THE INVITATION
EXTENDED TO HIM TO BECOME CENTER UNION CANDIDATE.
MAVROS RESPONDED THAT KANELLOPOULOS' DECISION
"GRIEVED THE ENTIRE GREEK PEOPLE" AND ADDED THAT HIS
PRESENCE IN GREEK PUBLIC LIFE WAS NECESSARY AND HIS CON-
TRIBUTION TO THE TASK OF THE NEXT PARLIAMENT IMPORTANT.

5. TRUE MOTIVATIONS FOR KANELLOPOULOS' DECISION OBSCURE.
TO SOME DEGREE, IT COULD REFLECT ANNOYANCE AT FACT HE
WAS NOT SELECTED IN CRITICAL PERIOD JULY 23-24 TO
HEAD FIRST POST-JUNTA GOVERNMENT. IT COULD ALSO
REFLECT HIS SUBSEQUENT PIQUE THAT CARAMANLIS DID NOT
OFFER HIM GREATER ROLE TO PLAY IN GOVERNMENT AND OR ERE
PARTY DURING NEXT FEW MONTHS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT
KANELLOPOULOS MAY FEEL THAT FUTURE PARLIAMENTARY
GOVERNMENT FACED WITH ROCKY ROAD AHEAD AND THAT
THREAT OF "ARMY IN THE WINGS" NOT YET DISSIPATED.
IN SUCH CASE HE MIGHT SEE REAL POSSIBILITIES FOR
PLAYING ROLE IN FUTURE AS AN UNSULLIED NATIONAL ASSET,
SHOULD CURRENT OR FUTURE POLITICAL LEADERS COME UP
AGAINST NEW CRISIS VIS-A-VIS MILITARY OR BODY POLITIC.
ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, THOUGH PERHAPS LESS LIKELY, IS THAT
KANELLOPOULOS HOPES TO BE APPOINTED TO EITHER
MINISTERIAL POSIBION OR TO HIGH POSITION IN GOVERNMENT OR
QUASI-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION AFTER ELECTIONS.
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